

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 220472

GENEVA FOR AMB. CARTER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, LI (TOLBERT, PRESIDENT WILLIAM)

SUBJECT: TOLBERT VISIT: AMBASSADOR HARMON'S CALL ON
AF/W

REF: STATE 211743

1. SEPTEMBER 1, AMBASSADOR HARMON CALLED ON AF/W TO DISCUSS TOLBERT VISIT. HARMON ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON ON AUGUST 29 FEELING UNWELL, AND THUS MISSED A MEETING ON AUGUST 30 BETWEEN CHIEF OF PROTOCOL BLACK AND AMBASSADOR DENNIS TO REVIEW SCHEDULE. HE SPENT AUGUST 31 IN NEW YORK. HE RETURNS TO LIBERIA, THROUGH EUROPE, SEPTEMBER 3.

2. MOST OF MEETING WITH AF/W CONCERNED WITH SCHEDULING AND OTHER DETAILS WHICH HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED AT GREATER LENGTH WITH AMBASSADOR DENNIS AND LARGELY SETTLED.

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FOLLOWING REPORTS ONLY THE SIGNIFICANT SUBSTANTIVE ITEM

THAT HE RAISED.

3. HARMON ASKED WHAT THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY MIGHT BE REGARDING THE "CONVERSATIONS WITH PARKER". WE REPLIED THAT MINISTER NEAL HAD TWO VERY USEFUL DAYS OF DISCUSSION WITH AID ADMINISTRATOR PARKER AND AID AND STATE OFFICERS

(REFTEL). THESE DISCUSSIONS HAD COVERED MANY SUBJECTS RANGING FROM MATTERS THAT WERE WELL KNOWN TO BOTH SIDES TO PROPOSALS WHICH HAVE NOT YET BEEN EXPLORED IN ANY DEPTH, SUCH AS THE PROPOSAL FOR NUCLEAR PLANTATIONS. WE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE US/LIBERIAN RELATIONSHIP THAT DISCUSSION, PARTICULARLY OF LIBERIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, IS DETAILED AND CONTINUOUS.

4. HARMON AGREED, BUT SAID THAT SPEAKING OFF THE RECORD, HE WOULD LIKE US TO UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT WOULD HAVE TO BE ABLE DEMONSTRATE ON HIS RETURN TO LIBERIA THAT THE US WAS INDEED DEEPLY INTERESTED IN, AND COMMITTED TO, LIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT. WE REPLIED THAT WE RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM PRESIDENT TOLBERT FACED, PARTICULARLY IN ANSWERING SOME OF HIS DOMESTIC CRITICS. WE SAID WE UNDERSTOOD WHY HE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO RETURN AND POINT TO SOME INTENSIFICATION OF THE US EFFORT WITH REGARD TO OUR ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA, BUT WE CAUTIONED HARMON THAT WE FACED TWO PROBLEMS.

5. FIRST, BECAUSE OUR RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA ARE SO CLOSE AND BECAUSE OUR DISCUSSIONS ARE CONTINUOUS ON THIS SUBJECT, IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO CONCEIVE OF A TOTALLY NEW INITIATIVE. PROPOSALS WHICH ARE TOTALLY UNRELATED TO CURRENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT NECESSARILY DESIRABLE, GIVEN THE LENGTH OF TIME AND THE CARE WHICH IS NECESSARY TO PREPARE PROGRAMS. THERE ARE SOME ASPECTS OF THE US/LIBERIAN RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED MORE EMPHASIS. AMONG THESE WERE HUMAN RESOURCES. INCREASED US INTEREST IN THIS AREA COULD BE TRACED BACK TO THE MEETING BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS AND SECRETARY KISSINGER IN NEW YORK IN CONFIDENTIAL

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SEPTEMBER 1975, A MEETING WHICH HAD LED TO AID ADMINISTRATOR PARKER'S VISIT TO MONROVIA, THEN TO THE STUDY TRIP OF THE HARVARD TEAM AND THE HIID REPORT. IN SHORT, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PULL RABBITS OUT OF THE HAT, WE WOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WAYS IN WHICH THE EXISTING PROGRAMS MIGHT BE GIVEN SOME NEW EMPHASIS.

6. THE SECOND PROBLEM GREW OUT OF OUR BUDGETARY PRO-

CEDURES. WE COULD NOT MAKE A COMMITMENT FOR SPECIFIC DOLLAR AMOUNTS OR FOR SPECIFIC PERIODS WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL. WE RECOGNIZE THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT MAY, SOONER OR LATER, BE ASKED TO PUT A VALUE ON MATTERS THAT MIGHT BE DISCUSSED WITH HIM DURING HIS VISIT, BUT WE COULD NOT DO THIS EXPLICITLY.

7. HARMON SAID HE UNDERSTOOD BOTH POINTS. HE WENT ON

TO COMMENT THAT HE HOPED THAT IN ANY STATEMENT MADE WE WOULD NOT REFER TO PER CAPITA AID RECEIVED BY LIBERIA. HARMON DISPLAYED NO FURTHER INTEREST IN A POSSIBLE AID PACKAGE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT.

8. ON OTHER MATTERS, HARMON SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD PRESENT A PLAQUE MADE FROM LIBERIAN IRON ORE TO THE UNITED STATES AND ASKED ABOUT THE MOST SUITABLE OCCASION WHEN THIS COULD BE DONE. WE SAID WE COULD LET HIM KNOW AS SOON AS WE KNOW THE TEXT ON THE PLAQUE AND ITS SIZE. ROBINSON

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